

AMENDED
Minutes of the
Subcommittee for RFP Requirements for Long Term Planning Consultant
March 15, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. with the following in attendance: Karen Bachus, Jennifer Ahearn, Camille Vella-Wilkinson, Colleen Smith, Cheryl Maynard*, Dean Burdon, Neena Savage, Celeste Mullane

[*Jennifer Mann will share with Cheryl Maynard]

Joseph daSilva (RIDE School Construction Coordinator) present to give presentation.

Election of Chair:

Ms. Bachus asked to be considered Chair of the group.

Motion-2014-1: Moved by Ms. Vella-Wilkinson, seconded by Ms. Ahearn to nominate Ms. Bachus as Chair.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Bachus commented there will be a 15-minute public comment; that is a total of 15 minutes; and since there were a number of people who wished to comment, she asked that no one monopolize the time period. (Timeframe 10:05 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.)

Bill Malone asked that you make sure to include complete busing costs and suggested data should be available from First Student since they are the largest school bus company; to look into the effect of busing on the school day and participation in school activities; and said smaller school outperform large schools. Henry K. suggested taking a broader look of schools and buildings, saying several schools have huge pieces of property around them. RFP does not focus on closing schools but use of buildings and grounds. Ken Gemma, special education teacher, suggested looking at how classroom utilized during the school day. How rooms will be utilized during state mandated testing – have to take tests on a computer. Darlene Netcoh felt that the word “consolidation” should not be used. Robert Savage (parent and lawyer) said perhaps nothing should happen - 900 students in each school – ideal high school 600 to 900 students – maybe things are fine the way they are. All we talk about is costs. Leave the high and junior high the way they are. Eugene Nadeau said he hoped that the completed report would be in conjunction with long term plan, taking the best of both. He commented that the smaller the classroom the better the education for students. Before we close any schools take into consideration sixth grade with seventh and eighth grade - 3 middle schools. When that is accomplished successfully, have Kindergarten full day, then at that time it could be considered what schools should be consolidated. Mr. Malone commented one other thing about the buses in the area of Veterans High School, traffic gets very congested. Patricia Nazareth commented that the quality of schools should be the same in all schools. The students should be getting the same education. Programs have been cut in the last 10 years, and her 14 year old was not getting the quality of education that her older children received.

Ms. Bachus acknowledged the Mayor, Mr. Carruolo, Ms. Furtado, Ms. Medeiros and Mr. Nadeau.

The Mayor requested presenting a copy of the long term consolidation committee report saying it would be helpful for background in discussions – what worked and what did not work. What is the timeline for issuing the RFP? Ms. Bachus said “we will take whatever time it takes.” Nina Savage said she would like to have this process open and transparent. The LTFPC proposal caused turmoil in the community with the way the process was done.

Ms. Ahearn said we are not creating the plan; we are creating the requirements to establish our RFP. Mr. Bardon disagreed not having a timeline, this would be dragged out; suggestion at least to have a date which forces all to get actively involved.

Ms. Vella-Wilkinson said she hoped that the RFP resulted in a comprehensive plan for the school district similar to the one created for the City. She said not all of our kids go on to higher education, and she thought speaking with members of the business community to identify education gaps would further develop some part of the curriculum.

Other suggestions made: need to do a “needs assessment,” resource material needs to be budgeted; not seeing this as a school closing committee, but as a planning committee for the future. If a school is closed, that is a piece of the comprehensive plan. The RFP should include an analysis of the curriculum, writing down specific deliverables, so we can compare apples to apples. The Mayor suggested asking faculty and students “what do you like about your school.”

Joseph daSilva spoke about facility planning process – Need someone who can facilitate and gather information: The points that he covered included were what is a facility planning/feasibility study; looking at it as a step stool – condition, demographics, education framework and costs. He reviewed and explained state trends in school planning, restructuring district schools, opportunities, enrollments, facilities condition, age, capacities and cost to bring to good condition, developing mapping zones (where students live, minimize busing, walking distance). He encouraged finding a consultant who will engage the community to determine a vision for Warwick’s school system. You need someone who can capture that vision. A consultant should look at state and national demographics and who will look at the capacity and quality of all buildings. Cost is a factor in facility planning. He commented that if you are using operating costs to fix schools, causes a problem offering educational programs. He suggested 3 committees: facilities committee, demographic committee and education committee.

Proposed next meeting March 27 (Thursday) at a place to be determined.

MOTION 2014-2: Moved by Ms. VellaWilkinson, seconded by Ms. Ahearn to adjourn.
MOTION PASSES

Meeting adjourned at 12:05